



Nandy, S., & Pomati, M. (2015). *Applying the Consensual Method of Estimating Poverty in a Low Income African Country*. Paper presented at World Social Science Forum, Durban, South Africa.

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

License (if available):
CC BY

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)
PDF-document

This is the final published version of the article (version of record). It first appeared online via Springer at 10.1007/s11205-014-0819-z. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/ebr-terms/>

Applying the Consensual Method of Estimating Poverty in a Low Income African Country



13-16 September 2015

World Social Science Forum 2015

Transforming global relations for a just world

Shailen Nandy, University of Bristol, UK,
s.nandy@Bristol.ac.uk

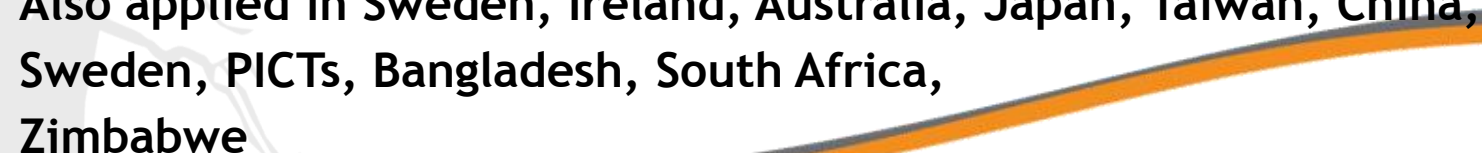
Marco Pomati, Cardiff University, UK,
PomatiM@cardiff.ac.uk

The Consensual Approach

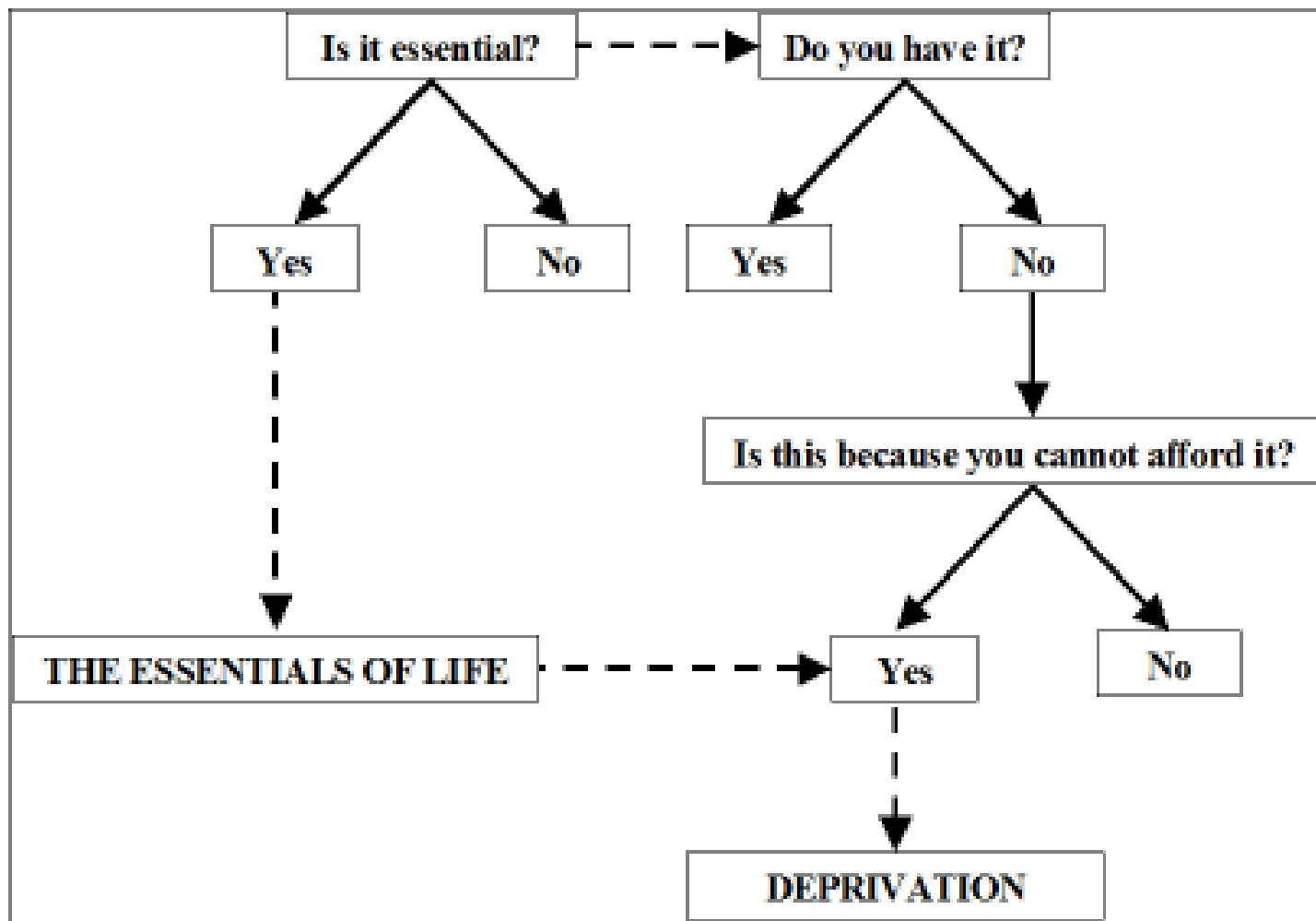


- **What is it?**
 - Growing agreement poverty is more than simply not being able to meet basic needs
 - Movement away from absolute to relative notions and indicators
 - Townsend's conceptualisation of poverty as relative deprivation when people "*lack the resources to obtain...the living conditions and amenities which are customary ...in the societies to which they belong*" (1979: 31)
 - Mack and Lansley adapted Townsend's approach to account for choice [*Poor Britain, 1985*]; followed up by Gordon and Pantazis [*Breadline Britain, 1997; Poverty and Social Exclusion 1999; PSE in the UK 2012*]

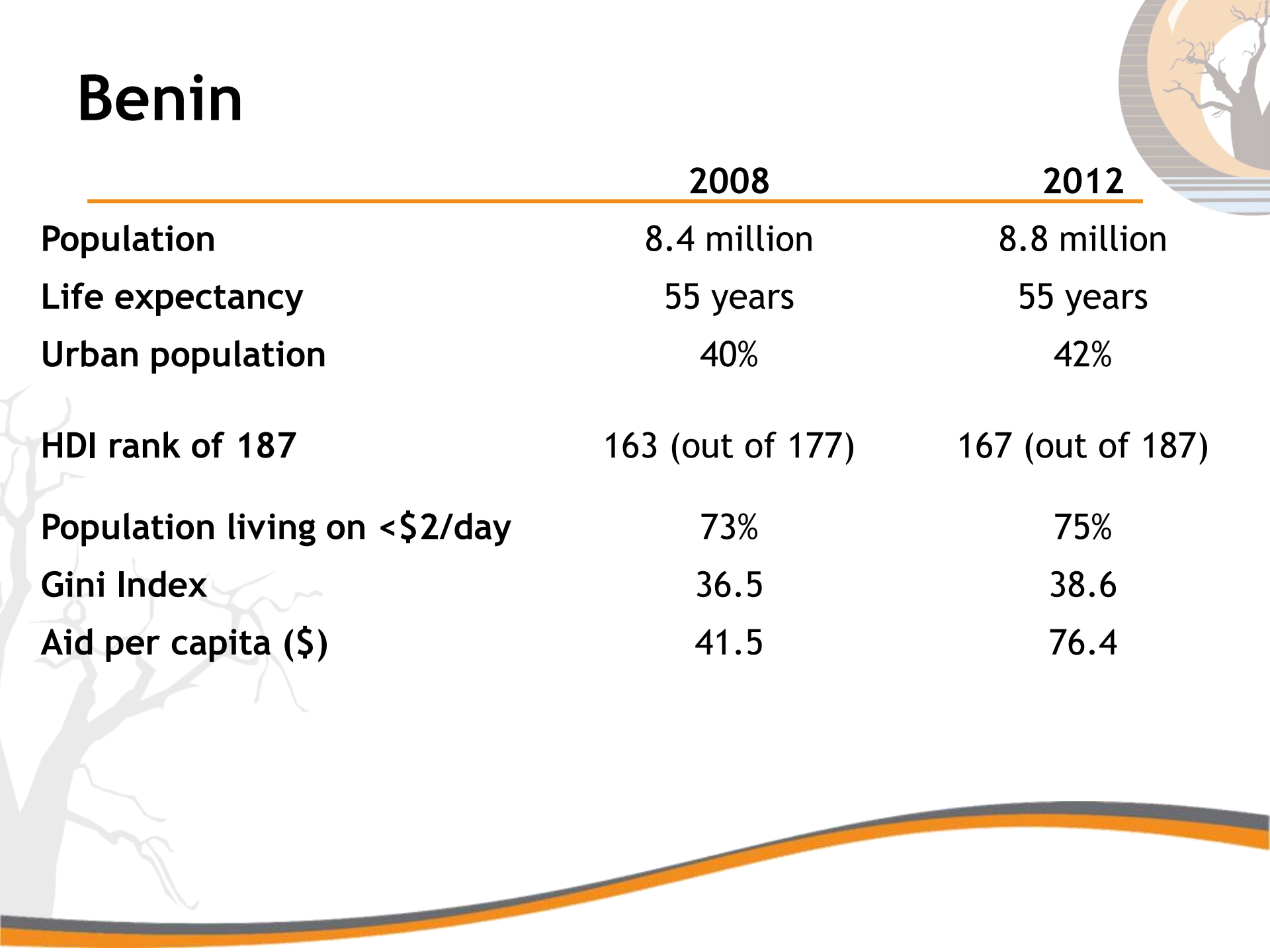
Also applied in Sweden, Ireland, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, China, Sweden, PICTs, Bangladesh, South Africa, Zimbabwe



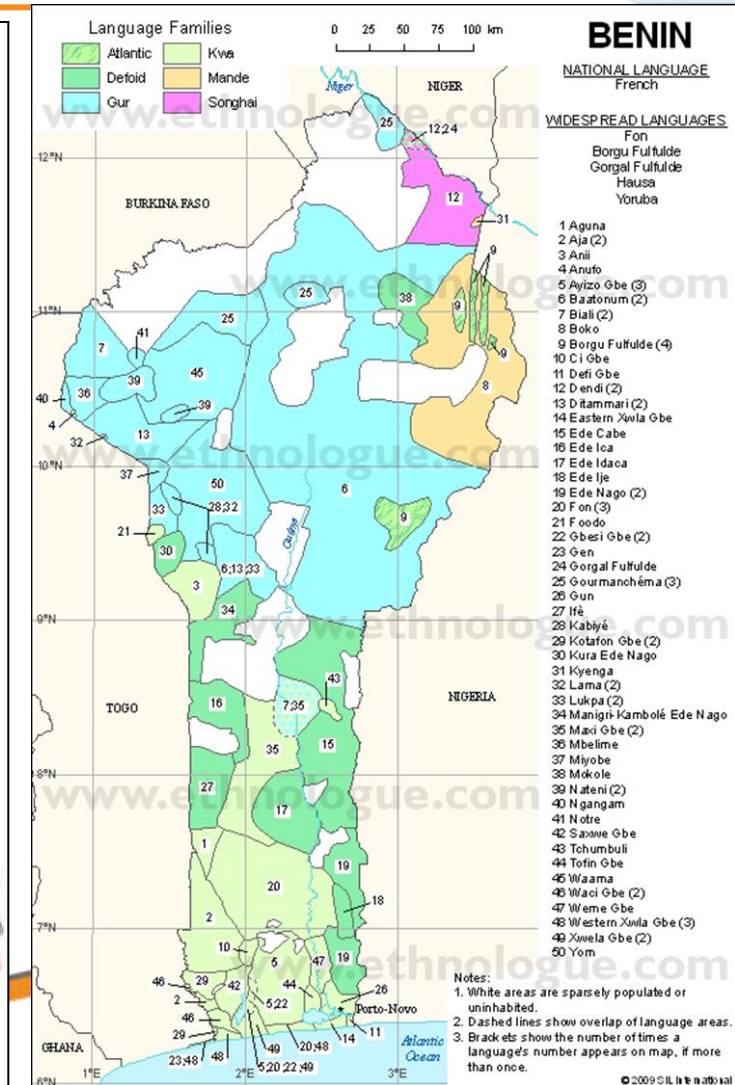
Ascertaining “enforced lack” of socially perceived essentials of life/necessities



Benin



	2008	2012
Population	8.4 million	8.8 million
Life expectancy	55 years	55 years
Urban population	40%	42%
HDI rank of 187	163 (out of 177)	167 (out of 187)
Population living on <\$2/day	73%	75%
Gini Index	36.5	38.6
Aid per capita (\$)	41.5	76.4



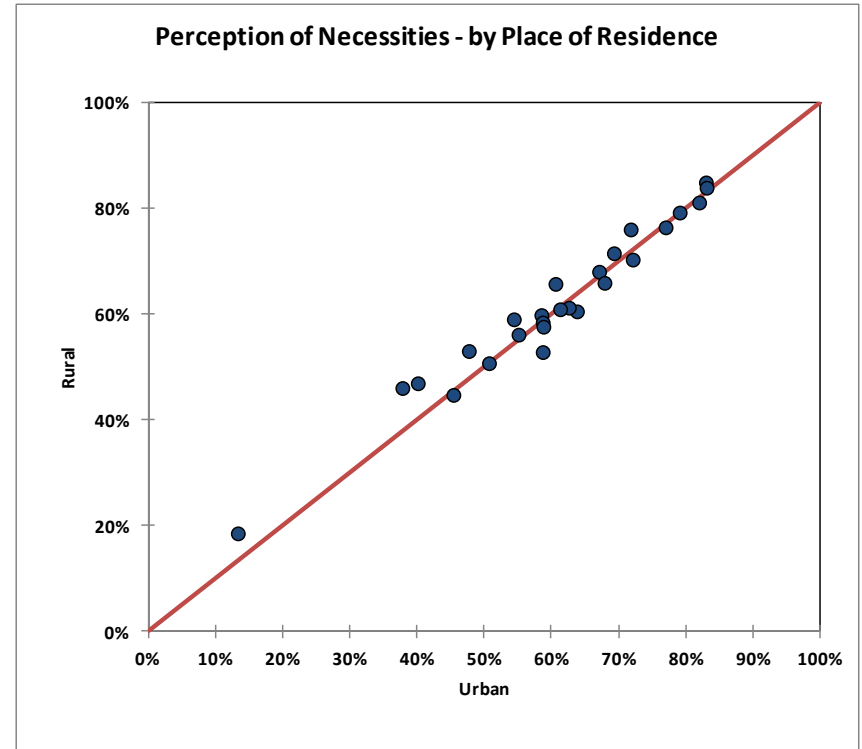
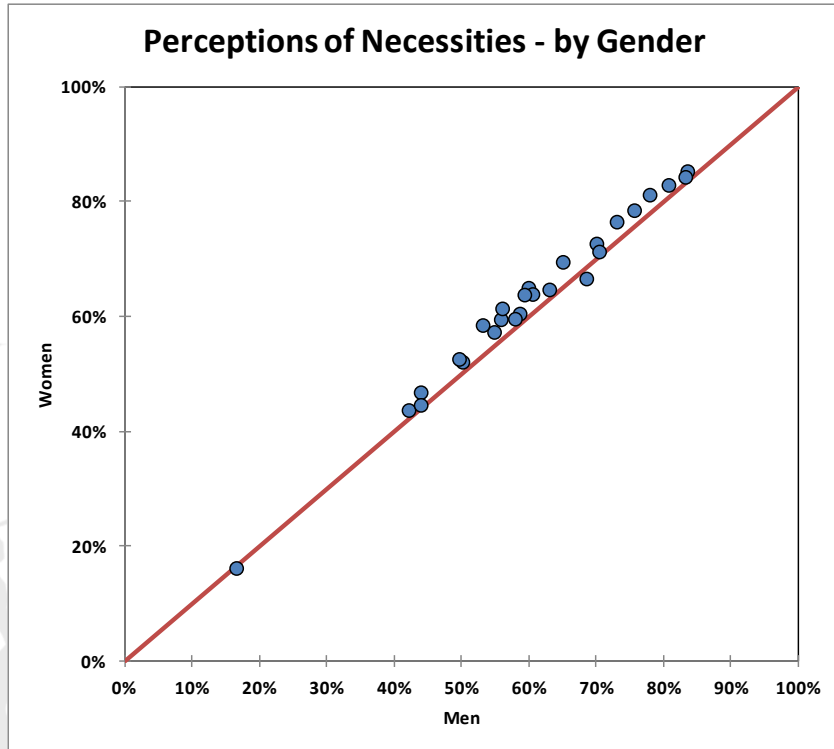


Examining Consensual Poverty in Benin



Perception of Essential Items in Benin, 2006 <i>“Do you regard as essential, necessary or not that the following items are part of the minimal/basic needs in order to have adequate life condition?”</i>	Essential (%)	Yes, rather necessary (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Need to have access to drinking water	84	15	0	100
Need to take care of oneself when sick	84	16	0	100
Need to have steady work	82	18	1	100
Need to be able to send children to school	79	20	1	100
Need to have access to electricity	77	22	2	100
Need to have three meals per day	74	24	2	100
Need to have a house	71	24	5	100
Need to have a radio	71	28	1	100
Need to have mode of transportation	68	30	2	100
Need to take of own body (soap, barber etc.)	67	32	1	100
Need to have a good meal on Sundays and holidays	64	33	4	100
Need to have personal care products	62	36	2	100
Need to have tables and beds	62	36	2	100
Need to have several sets of clothing	61	36	2	100
Need to have a spacious house	59	37	4	100
Need to be able to buy a television	59	38	4	100
Need to have several sets of shoes	58	38	4	100
Need to have meat or fish every day	57	36	7	100
Need to be able to take a taxi	56	42	2	100
Need to have birth control	55	37	8	100
Need to have cereals or food made from roots or tubers every	51	37	12	100
Need to take vacation	51	43	6	100
Need to be able to take the bus	45	46	9	100
Need to be able to buy presents when needed	44	51	5	100
Need to have vegetables every day	43	40	17	100
Need to work day and night	17	24	60	100

Reflecting Consensus



(%) Respondents believing item “essential” .	Place of residence		Age		Sex		Religion			Ethnicity			Ever attended school			Marital status			
	Urban	Rural	16-24	65+	Male	Female	Traditional (Vodoun)	Islam	Catholic	Adja and related	Fon and related	Yoruba and related	No	Yes	Never married	Married	Live together	Widowed	Divorced
Access to drinking water	83	85	84	83	84	85	83	79	85	79	88	86	84	85	84	84	89	86	83
Take care of oneself when sick	83	84	83	83	83	84	82	80	85	77	87	86	84	84	81	84	85	85	81
Have steady work	82	81	82	78	81	83	80	75	84	75	87	85	81	83	81	82	82	82	80
Be able to send children to school	79	79	80	77	78	81	78	71	81	76	84	82	78	81	77	80	83	80	75
Have access to electricity	77	77	78	74	76	79	77	70	78	75	82	79	76	79	77	77	71	77	75
Have three meals per day	72	76	74	73	73	77	77	64	75	72	80	72	76	73	70	75	64	78	74
Have a house	72	70	71	70	70	73	69	65	74	66	77	70	70	73	71	71	69	74	72
Have a radio	69	72	71	68	70	71	72	62	72	68	76	70	70	73	69	71	67	69	69
Have mode of transportation	67	68	69	64	69	67	67	63	69	63	71	68	66	70	66	69	65	63	61
Take of own body (soap, barber etc.)	68	66	68	66	65	70	65	61	69	65	71	66	66	69	66	67	63	70	66
Have a good meal on Sundays and holidays	61	66	61	65	63	65	65	60	63	59	66	62	66	61	59	64	62	67	62
Have personal care products	64	61	63	58	60	65	61	54	65	62	67	60	60	65	61	62	58	64	63
Have tables and beds (furniture)	63	61	64	59	61	64	62	53	64	64	66	62	60	65	61	62	58	61	57
Have several sets of clothing	61	61	63	59	59	64	63	51	63	63	66	59	60	63	61	61	50	65	61
Have a spacious house	59	60	60	59	59	61	61	53	61	61	62	53	60	59	57	60	55	60	57
Be able to buy a television	59	59	61	54	58	60	60	50	61	61	64	58	56	62	60	59	59	56	54
Have meat or fish every day	54	59	57	58	56	60	60	50	57	60	61	52	59	56	54	57	48	61	56
Have several sets of shoes	59	58	60	56	56	61	61	48	60	60	64	56	57	60	58	58	43	61	58
Be able to take a taxi	55	56	54	57	55	57	55	47	58	52	59	57	55	57	54	56	51	58	57
Have birth control	59	53	58	50	53	59	52	47	60	57	60	52	52	60	58	55	58	54	53
Have cereals or food made from roots or tubers every	48	53	52	51	50	52	53	47	50	52	53	44	53	48	46	51	48	55	53
Take a vacation	51	51	53	48	50	53	52	43	53	52	56	51	49	53	51	51	43	50	44
Be able to take the bus	45	45	46	45	44	47	47	37	46	47	48	45	45	46	44	45	43	46	46
Have vegetables every day	38	46	42	44	42	44	45	42	41	46	43	36	46	39	40	43	40	48	43
Be able to buy presents when needed	40	47	43	44	44	45	50	38	44	49	46	41	45	43	40	45	38	44	41
Work day and night	13	19	16	16	17	16	21	18	14	24	13	16	18	14	14	17	23	16	14



Establishing an ‘enforced lack’...

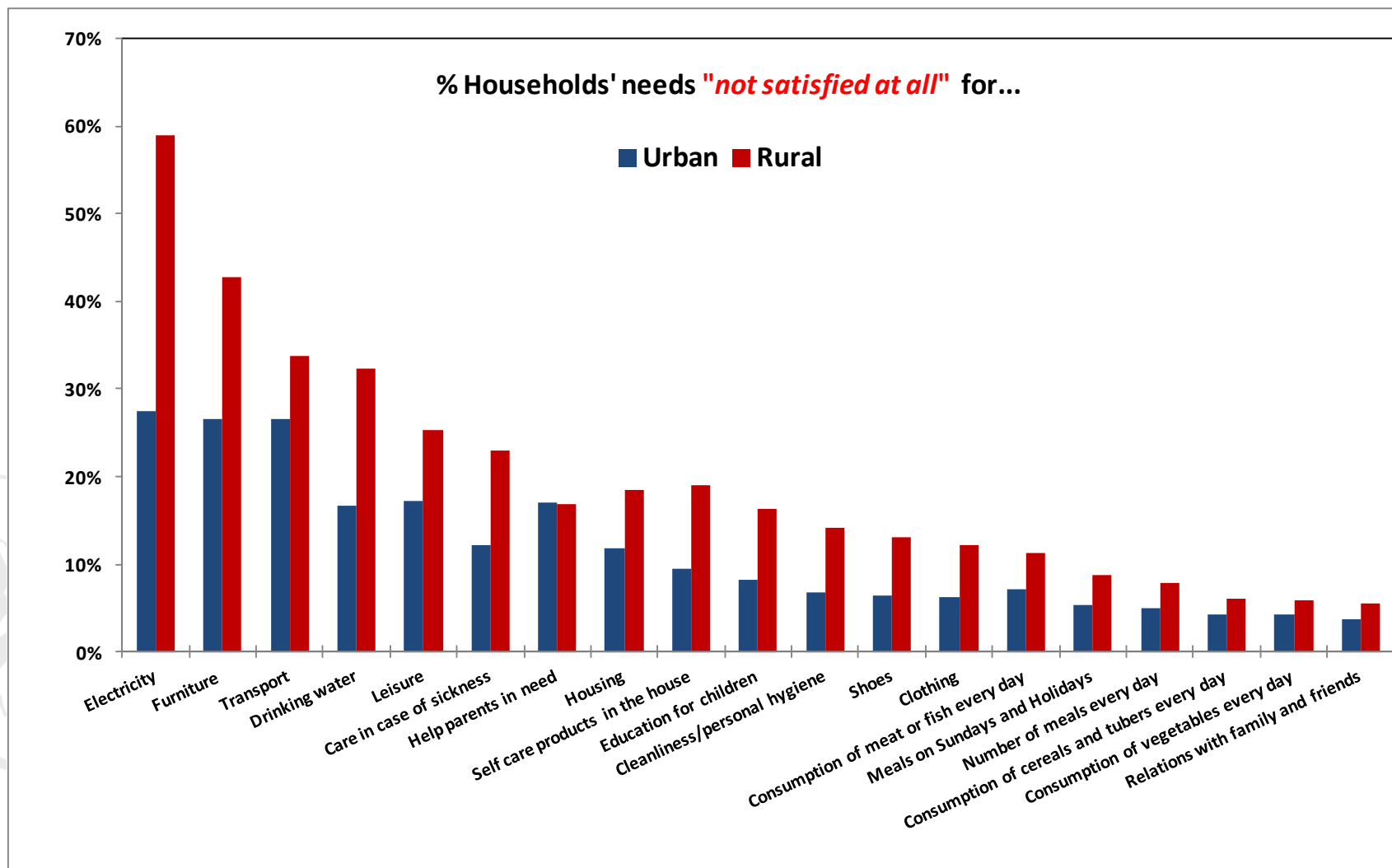
Respondent’s Needs Satisfaction. -*“Are you satisfied with how the minimal needs of your household are met in the following domains?”*

[Response categories : 1.Very satisfied 2. Satisfied 3. No, not really 4. **No, not at all**]

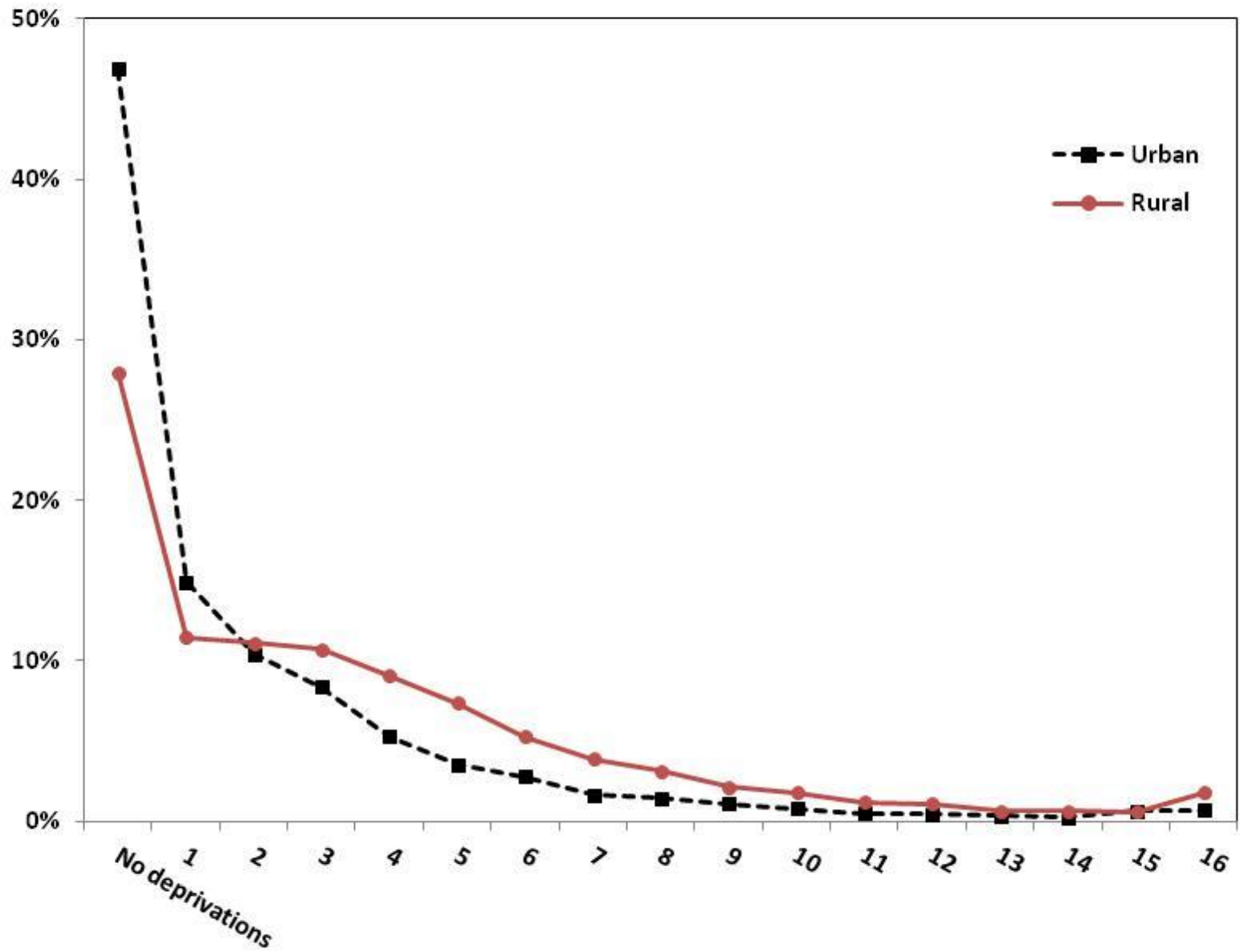
% Responding
“No, Not at all”

Satisfied with availability of electricity	46
Satisfied with furniture in the house	36
Satisfied with availability of transport	31
Satisfied with availability of drinking water	26
Satisfied with availability of leisure	22
Satisfied with care in case of sickness	19
Satisfied with help to parents in need	17
Satisfied with housing	16
Satisfied with self care products in the house	15
Satisfied with education for children	13
Satisfied with cleanliness / personal hygiene	11
Satisfied with shoes	10
Satisfied with clothing	10
Satisfied with consumption of meat or fish every day	10
Satisfied with meals on Sundays and Holidays	7
Satisfied with number of meals every day	7
Satisfied with consumption of cereals and tubers every day	5
Satisfied with consumption of vegetables every day	5
Satisfied with relations with family and friends	5

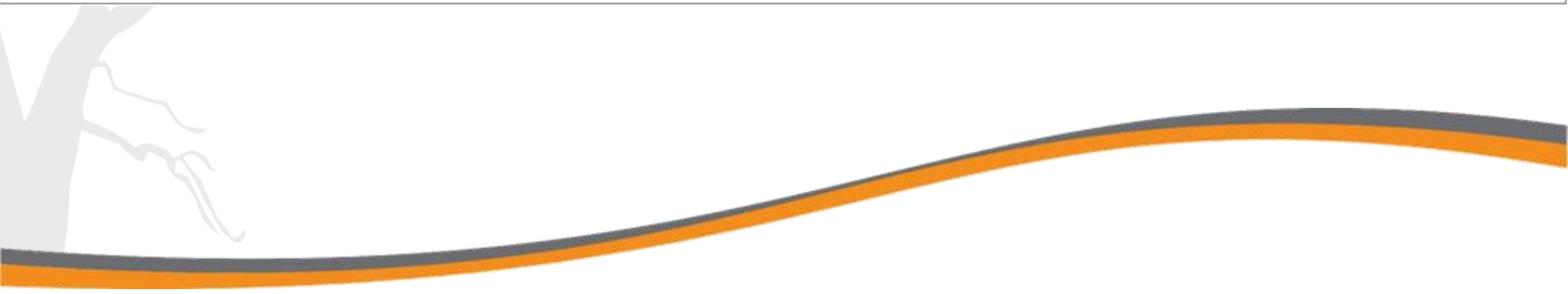
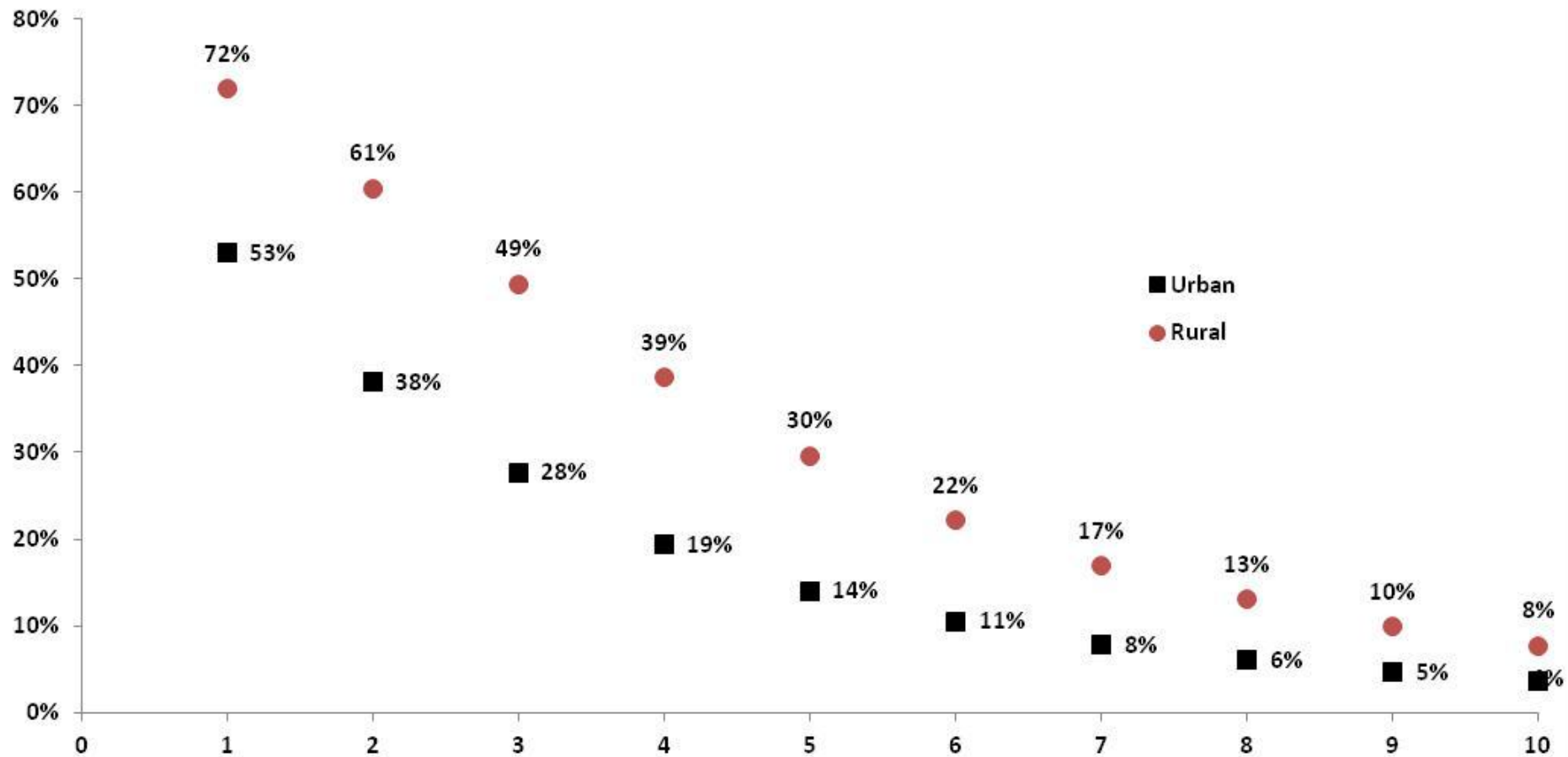
Unmet needs greatest in rural areas



Number of Deprivations Experienced (needs "not satisfied at all")

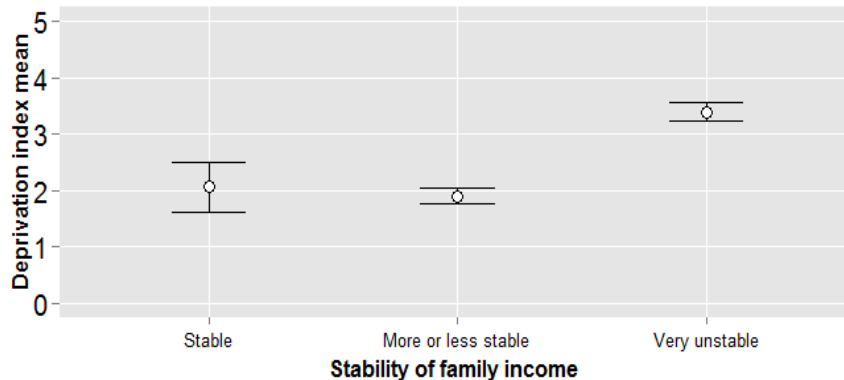
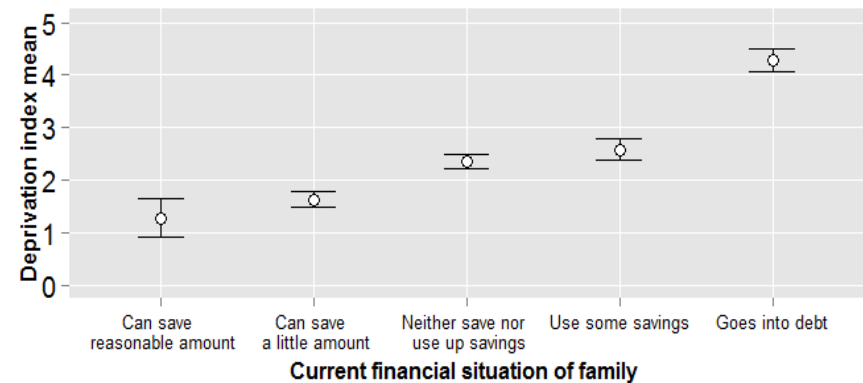
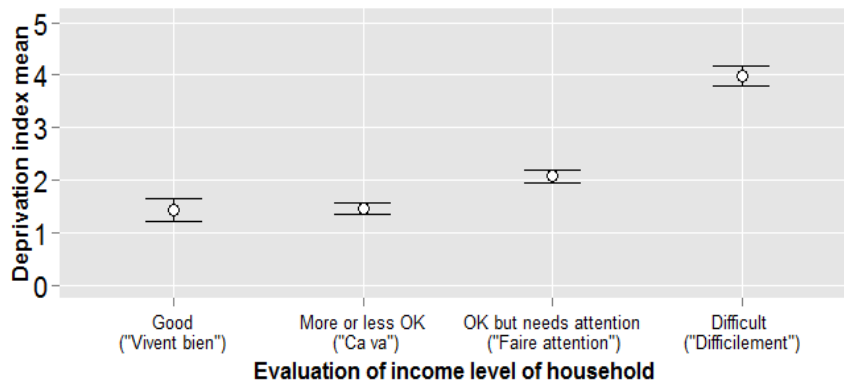


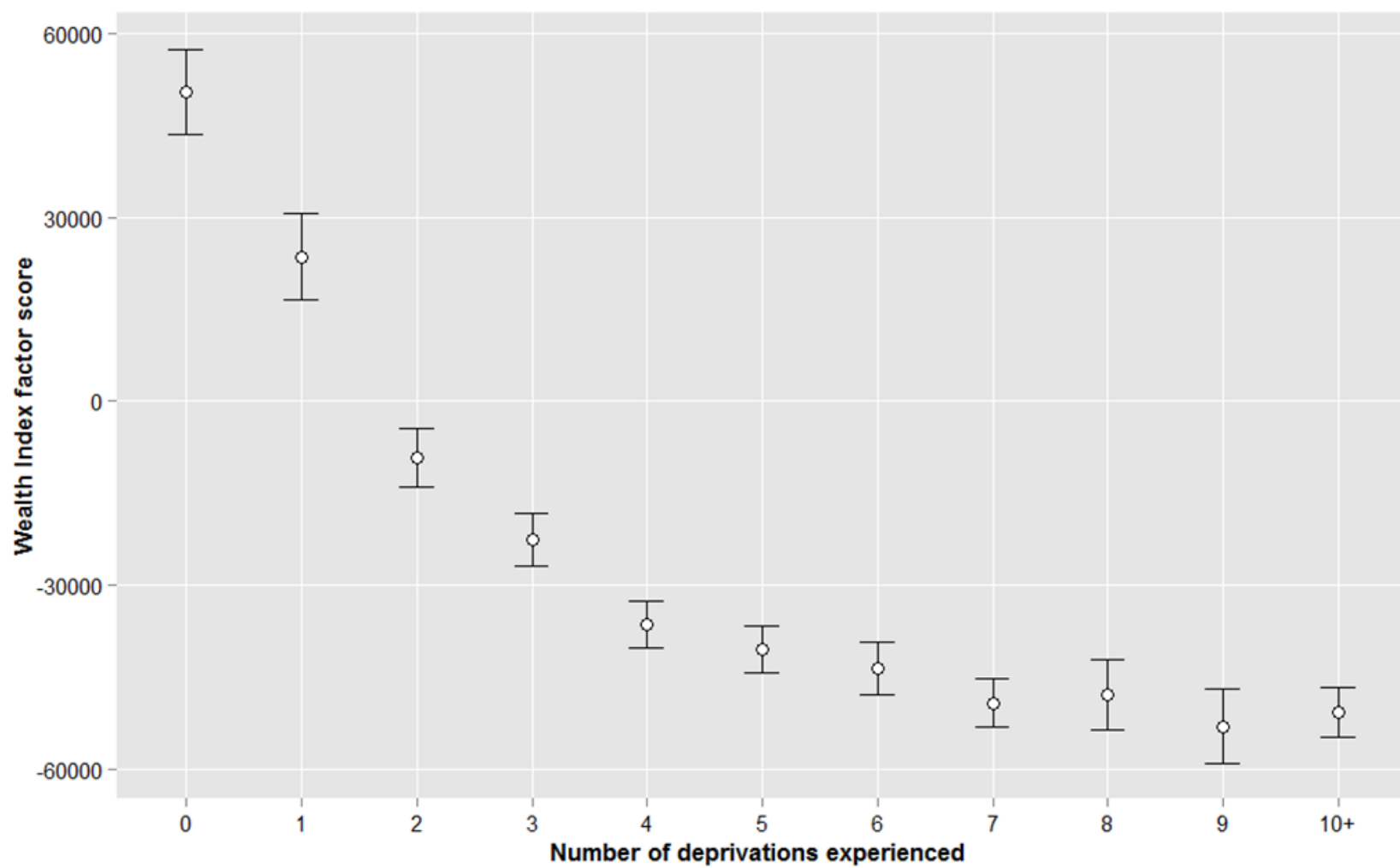
Poverty estimates based on varying thresholds of deprivation(s)



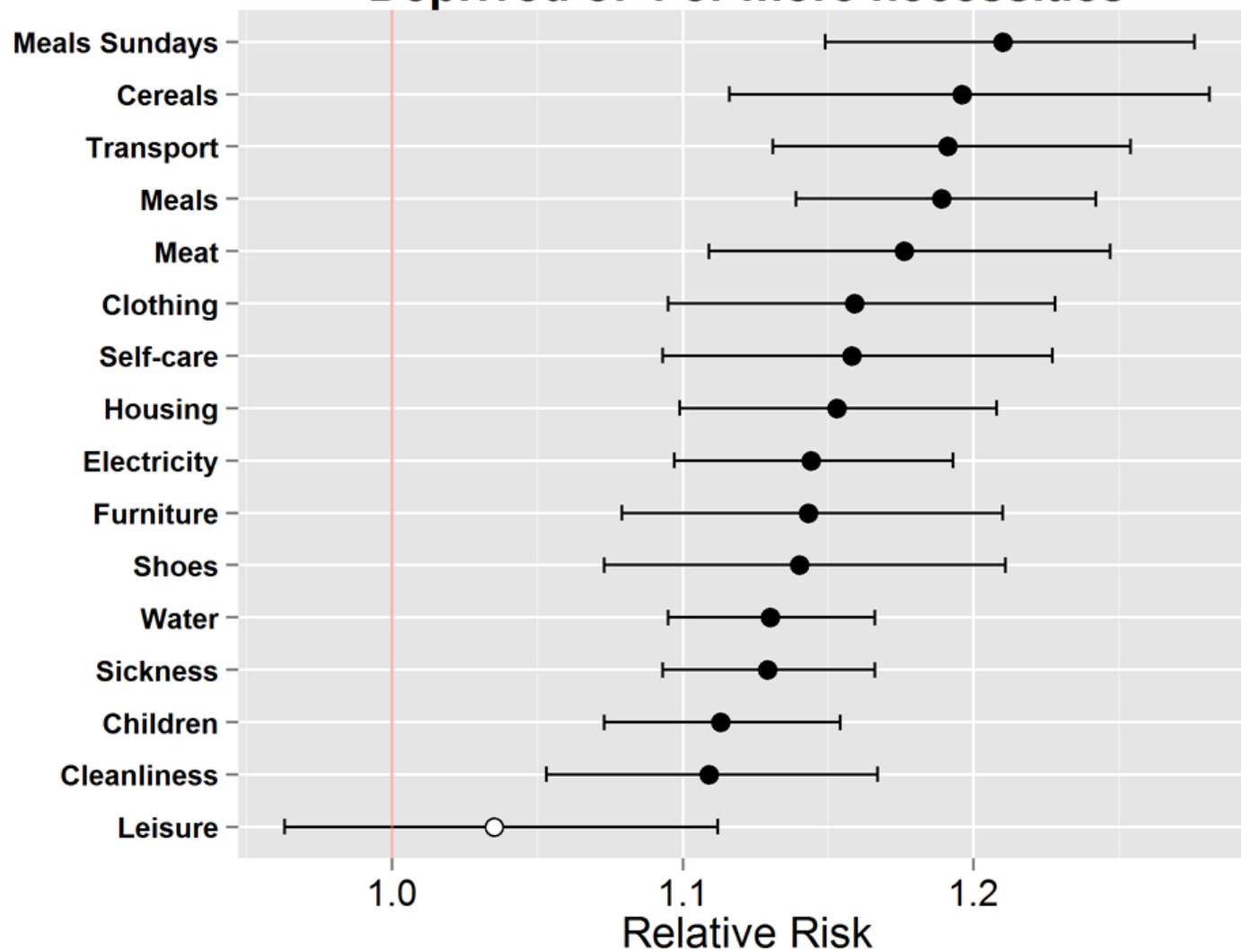
Establishing scale reliability and validity

- Scale reliability for 16-item scale: Chronbach's Alpha = **0.885**



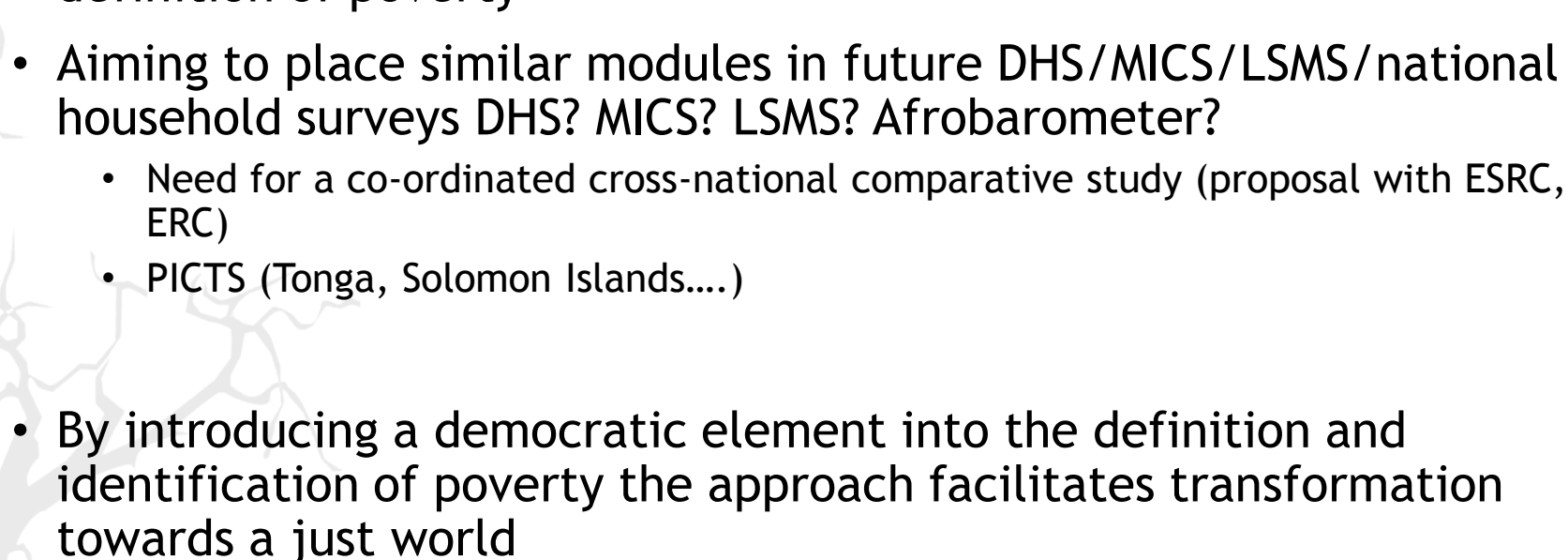


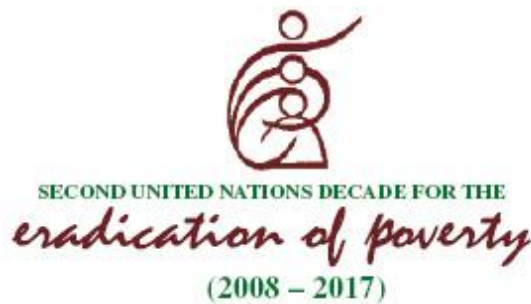
Deprived of 4 or more necessities



Conclusions



- Real potential for the Consensual Approach to be used more widely in low and middle income countries
 - Slight adaptations allows for culturally appropriate, democratic definition of poverty
 - Aiming to place similar modules in future DHS/MICS/LSMS/national household surveys DHS? MICS? LSMS? Afrobarometer?
 - Need for a co-ordinated cross-national comparative study (proposal with ESRC, ERC)
 - PICTS (Tonga, Solomon Islands....)
 - By introducing a democratic element into the definition and identification of poverty the approach facilitates transformation towards a just world
- 



Open access paper:

**S Nandy and M Pomati (2014), Applying the Consensual Method of
Estimating Poverty in a Low Income African Setting, Social Indicators
Research,**

DOI: 10.1007/s11205-014-0819-z

Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research

www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty

**Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK
(Questionnaires, working papers, data)**

www.poverty.ac.uk